



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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NEWS ADVISORY

Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., branch chiefs to welcome Interior Secretary Kenneth Salazar, Solicitor Hilary Tompkins, BIA Director Larry EchoHawk to Navajoland on Thursday

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., will welcome Interior Secretary Kenneth Salazar, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry EchoHawk and Interior Department Solicitor Hilary Tompkins to the Navajo Nation on Thursday.

A press conference is scheduled for 3 p.m. Thursday at the Navajo Nation Veterans Park before the scenic Window Rock. The location is in front of the Office of the President and Vice President in Window Rock.

Ms. Tompkins is the highest-ranking Navajo in the federal government. She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as solicitor of the Department of the Interior on June 17, 2009. As solicitor, Ms. Tompkins is the chief general counsel for Interior and represents the department in administrative and judicial litigation and meetings, negotiations and other contracts with Congress, federal agencies, states, tribes and the public.

“We are proud to welcome back one of our own,” President Shirley said Wednesday. “The Navajo people always encourage their young to work hard, get educated, and come back to help their people. Hilary has done that and has gone beyond. She has worked, studied, struggled, and now is in one of the highest offices in the land. She came back to help her people with the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, went on to work for New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, and now she’s been called to serve the nation and all Native Americans by the President of the United States. The Navajo people could not be more proud of one of our daughters.”

Ms. Tompkins served as a law clerk for the Navajo Nation Supreme Court in Window Rock. Before becoming a lawyer, she worked for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice as a tribal court advocate after passing the Navajo Nation bar exam.

She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Dartmouth College and her law degree from Stanford University where she was associate editor of the Stanford Law Review.

Before becoming solicitor, Ms. Tompkins served as an adjunct professor at the University of New Mexico School of Law. From 2003 to 2008, she was chief counsel to Gov. Richardson, whom she advised on legal and policy issues including legislation, judicial appointments, executive orders, constitutional authority, civil litigation, statutory interpretation, and intergovernmental affairs. She also managed the legal staff in the Governor’s office, supervised the general counsels in more than 20 state executive agencies, and advised the governor on Native American affairs.

During the Clinton administration, Ms. Tompkins served as an honors program trial lawyer in the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The President, Navajo Nation Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan and Navajo Nation Supreme Court Chief Justice Herb Yazzie are scheduled to give the visiting dignitaries an hour-long tour of the area prior to the press conference.

Following the press conference, the Navajo Nation branch chiefs and Interior officials will have a private meeting in the President’s office.

Among the topics to be discussed are the Navajo Nation’s priorities concerning law enforcement, education and economic development.

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